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ABSTRACT

The one room school is a challenging educational setting for both teacher and student. Isolation of the school, limited availability of educational resources, and the demanding role of the school as the only formal educational institution within the community are conditions which make classroom efficiency an important consideration for the principal/teacher. Four principles which relate to classroom efficiency can be applied to most situations: (1) the efficient classroom is a center of learning activities; (2) an efficient classroom is supported by one or more storage rooms; (3) the use of learning centers is an efficient method of organizing classroom resources; and (4) the efficient classroom is in a state of flux. Five steps can be followed to create an efficient classroom. First, draw a diagram of the classroom in its present arrangement. Second, mark stored materials not actively used in learning activities with red X's and materials blocking chalkboards or degrading learning options with blue X's. Next, list the specific learning activities to take place in the classroom. Then make a new diagram to facilitate these learning activities. Finally, rearrange the room according to the new design, being careful to keep materials not presently needed neatly organized in the support/store room. (NEC)

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This study was developed last year as part of the Aleutian District Title I Program. Although the study specifically addresses the one room school, the principles also apply to the self-contained classroom.

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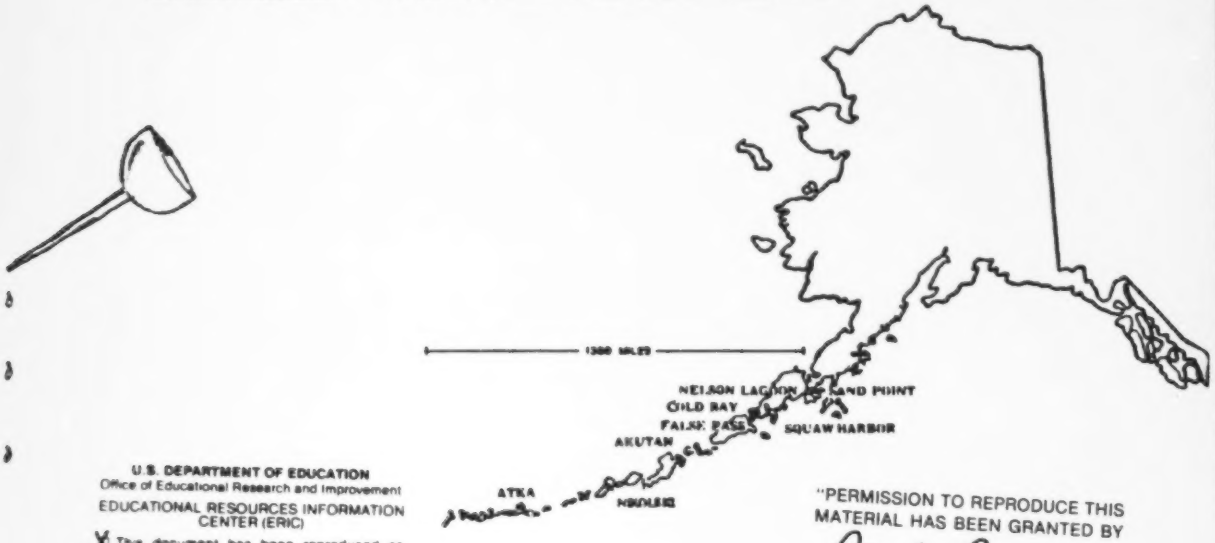
Increasing The Efficiency of the One Room School



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The one room school is a challenging educational setting for both teacher and student. The isolation of the school, limited availability of educational resources and the demanding role of the school as the only formal educational institution within the community are conditions which make classroom efficiency an important consideration for the principal/teacher.

There are a number of principles which relate to classroom efficiency. These are not hard and fast rules but rather generalizations which seem to apply to most situations.

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Principles of Classroom Efficiency

1. The efficient classroom is a center of learning activities.

Furniture and materials in the classroom should directly support specific learning activities. Do not use precious classroom floorspace for storage.

2. An efficient classroom is supported by one or more storage rooms.

If furniture or materials are not actively involved with or directly support a learning activity, remove them to a storage area until needed. Use the storage room as a support facility, a staging area for the classroom.

3. The use of learning centers is an efficient method of organizing classroom resources.

Organizing reading materials into a reading center for example makes sense for two big reasons:

A. With materials in one area, no time is lost trying to locate materials scattered about the room.

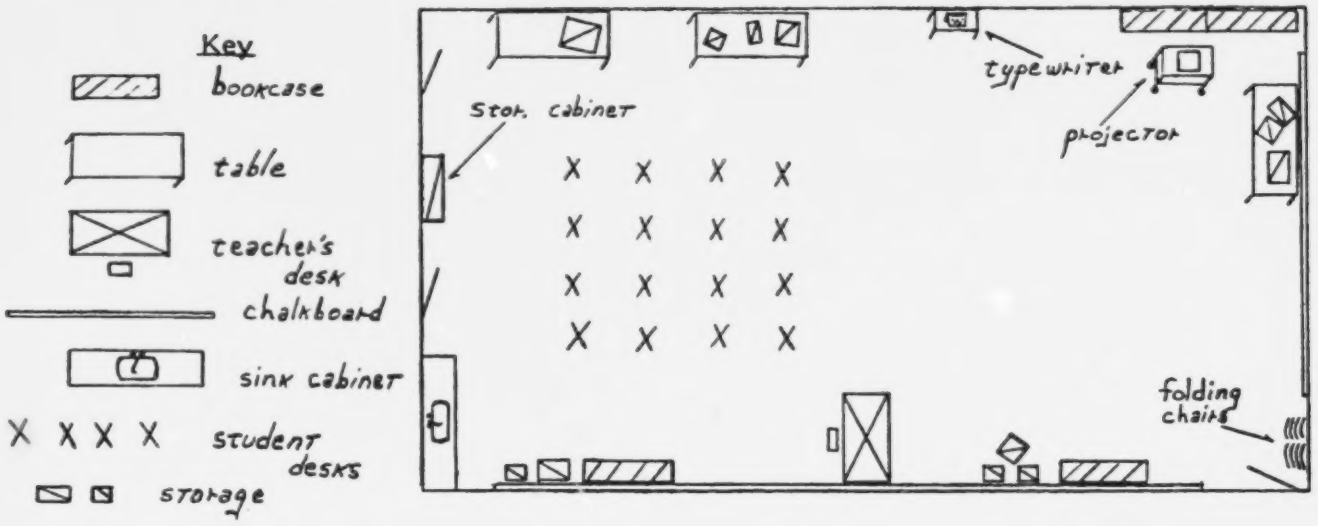
B. The arrangement of the center (books, table, chairs, pencils, paper, rug, blackboard, etc.) encourages reading behavior.

4. The efficient classroom is in a state of flux.

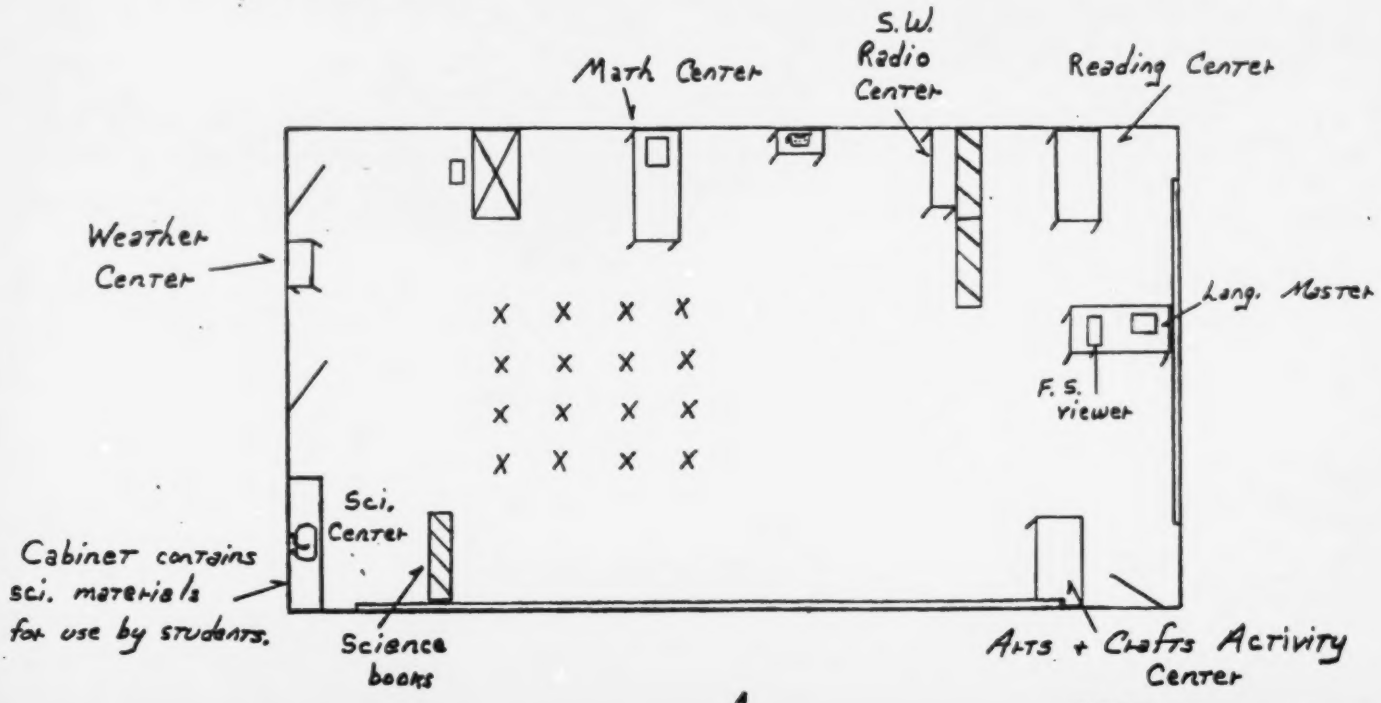
Materials are circulated from the support room to the classroom as needed and returned when unused. Learning centers can be rearranged or changed entirely to support the learning activities desired by the teacher.

Redesigning A Classroom

The classroom drawn below has furniture and storage boxes arranged along the walls. Over 40% of the chalkboard space is made unusable by bookcases and tables. Reading, math, science and language arts materials are scattered randomly in bookcases and tables throughout the room. Because of open storage, 50% of the available table space is unusable. The large open area reflects the teacher's desire for space to conduct large group activities.



After learning about efficient room design, the teacher and aide redesigned their room. The following design was the result:



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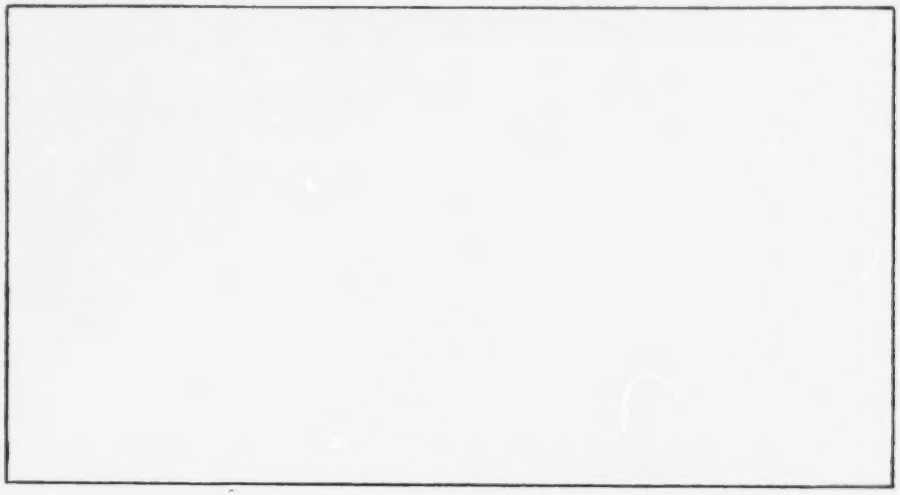
The teaching materials for reading, math and science are conveniently located at centers. The boxes of unused material are in the support room. Usable table space is increased by 40% and usable chalkboard space by 30%. Open space for group activities is retained. The room has the illusion of more space than the previous arrangement.

Do Your Own Room Design

Step 1

Using the same Key, draw your room as it is right now.



Step 2

Mark with red X's, stored material in the open or hidden which is not actively used in the learning activities. Mark with blue X's furniture or materials which are blocking chalkboard or degrading learning options.

Step 3

Identify the specific learning activities you want to take place in your room.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

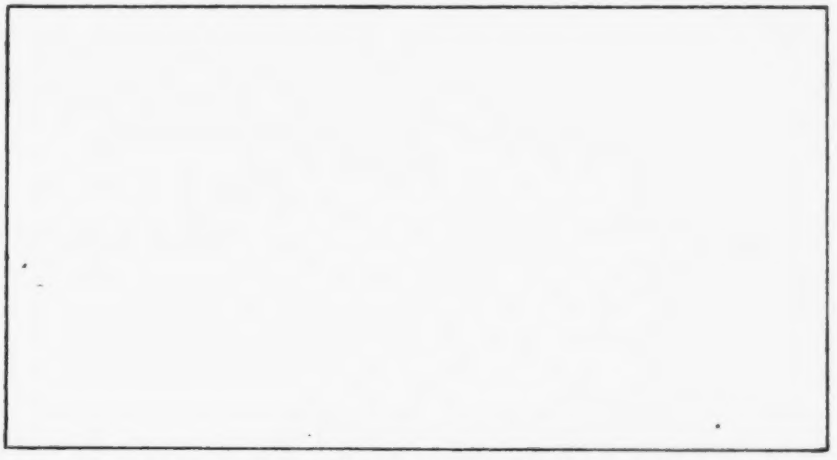
G. _____

H. _____

I. _____

Step 4

Design your own room to increase overall efficiency and promote the learning activities you desire.



Step 5

Rearrange your room according to your design. Hint -- When rearranging, don't junk up your support room. Keep it neatly organized so you know where materials are.

When you have finished step 5, sit down, have a cup of coffee and congratulate yourself. You have just completed a practicum in:

(check one)

Creating your own teaching environment_____

Educational Environmental Engineering _____

Desk moving _____

Enjoy your new classroom!